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Pelosi bars Trump allies from Jan. 6 probe; GOP vows boycott

In this June 30, 2021 file photo, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., responds to a question at a news conference as the House prepares to vote on the creation of a select committee to investigate the Jan. 6 insurrection, at the Capitol in Washington. Associated Press Page 2

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Pelosi bars Trump allies from Jan. 6 probe; GOP vows boycott

From Front

By **MARY CLARE JALONICK**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Wednesday rejected two Republicans tapped by House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy to sit on a committee investigating the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection, a decision the Republican denounced as “an egregious abuse of power.” McCarthy said the GOP won’t participate in the investigation if Democrats won’t accept the members he appointed. Pelosi cited the “integrity” of the probe in refusing to accept the appointments of Indiana Rep. Jim Banks, picked by McCarthy to be the top Republican on the panel, or Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan. The two men are outspoken allies of former President Donald Trump, whose supporters laid siege to the Capitol that day and interrupted the certification of President Joe Biden’s win. Both of them voted to overturn the election results in the hours after the siege. Democrats have said the investigation will go on whether the Republicans participate or not, as Pelosi has already appointed eight of the 13 members — including Republican Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, a Trump critic — and that gives them a bipartisan quorum to proceed, according to committee rules. Pelosi said she had spoken with McCarthy and told him that she would reject the two names.

“With respect for the integrity of the investigation, with an insistence on the truth and with concern about statements made and actions taken by these members, I must reject the recommendations



Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, speaks during a news conference as Rep. Jim Banks, R-Ind., and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., looks on at Capitol Hill, in Washington, Wednesday, July 21, 2021.

of Representatives Banks and Jordan to the Select Committee,” Pelosi said in a statement. The move is emblematic of the raw political tensions in Congress that have only escalated since the insurrection and raises the possibility that the investigation — the only comprehensive probe currently being conducted of the attack — will be done almost entirely by Democrats. Pelosi originally tried to create an independent investigation that would have been evenly split between the parties, but Senate Republicans blocked that approach in a vote last month.

McCarthy immediately issued a statement that said her move will damage the institution of Congress.

“Unless Speaker Pelosi reverses course and seats all five Republican nominees, Republicans will not be party to their sham process and will instead pursue our own investigation of the facts,” McCarthy said.

Shortly afterward, he blasted the Democratic leader in a news conference with all five members. “The only way to reverse this is to seat these five,” McCarthy said. It is unclear how McCarthy would lead a separate investigation, as the minority does not have the power to set up committees. But he said the panel has lost “all legitimacy” because Pelosi wouldn’t allow the Republicans to name their own members.

Most in the GOP have remained loyal to Trump despite the violent insurrection of his supporters that sent many lawmakers running for their lives. McCarthy wouldn’t say for weeks whether Republicans would even participate in the probe, but he sent the five names to Pelosi on Monday. Pelosi accepted McCarthy’s three other picks — Illinois Rep. Rodney Davis, North Dakota Rep. Kelly Armstrong and Texas Rep. Troy Nehls. But McCarthy said that all five or none

would participate.

Like Jordan and Banks, Nehls voted to overturn Biden’s victory. Armstrong and Davis voted to certify the election.

Banks recently traveled with Trump to the U.S.-Mexico border and visited him at his New Jersey golf course. In a statement after McCarthy tapped him for the panel, he sharply criticized the Democrats who had set it up.

“Make no mistake, Nancy Pelosi created this committee solely to malign conservatives and to justify the Left’s authoritarian agenda,” Banks said.

Democrats whom Pelosi appointed to the committee earlier this month were angry over that statement, according to a senior Democratic aide familiar with the private deliberations and who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss them. They were also concerned over Banks’ two recent visits with Trump, the person said.

Jordan, the top Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, was one of Trump’s most vocal defenders during his two impeachments and last month likened the new investigation to “impeachment three.” Trump was impeached by the House and acquitted by the Senate both times. The back-and-forth came after all but two Republicans opposed the creation of the select committee in a House vote last month, with most in the GOP arguing that the majority-Democratic panel would conduct a partisan probe. Only Cheney and another frequent Trump critic, Republican Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, voted in favor of the panel.

Cheney told reporters she agrees with Pelosi’s decision to reject Jordan and Banks. “The rhetoric around this from the minority leader and from those two members has been disgraceful,” she said. The panel will hold its first hearing next week, with at least four rank-and-file police officers who battled rioters that day testifying about their experiences. Dozens of police officers were injured as the crowd pushed past them and broke into the Capitol building.

Mississippi Rep. Bennie Thompson, the chair of the panel, said the committee would carry out its duties.

“It has been more than 6 months since the attack, we owe it to our democracy to stay the course and not be distracted by side-shows,” Thompson said in a statement. “That is exactly what we will be doing next Tuesday, when the bipartisan committee members take testimony from front-line heroes who put their lives on the line to protect our democracy.” □

Wildfire smoke clouds sky, hurts air quality on East Coast

By GILLIAN FLACCUS and SARA CLINE

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) —

Smoke and ash from massive wildfires in the American West clouded the sky and led to air quality alerts Wednesday on parts of the East Coast as the effects of the blazes were felt 2,500 miles (4,023 kilometers) away.

Strong winds blew smoke east from California, Oregon, Montana and other states all the way to other side of the continent. Haze hung over New York City, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The nation's largest wildfire, Oregon's Bootleg Fire, grew to 616 square miles (1,595 square kilometers) — just over half the size of Rhode Island. Fires also burned on both sides of California's Sierra Nevada and in Washington state and other areas of the West.

The smoke blowing to the East Coast was reminiscent of last fall, when large blazes burning in Oregon's worst wildfire season in recent memory choked the local sky with pea-soup smoke but also affected air quality several thousand miles away. So far this year, Seattle and Portland have largely been spared the foul air.

People in parts of New Jer-



The Staten Island Ferry departs from the Manhattan terminal through a haze of smoke with the Statue of Liberty barely visible, Tuesday, July 20, 2021, in New York.

Associated Press

sey, Pennsylvania and elsewhere with heart disease, asthma and other health issues were told to avoid the outdoors. Air quality alerts for parts of the region were in place through Thursday. "One of the things about this event that makes it so remarkable is that the smoke is affecting such a large swath of the U.S.," said Jesse Berman, an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health and an expert on air quality. "You're not just seeing localized and perhaps upstate New York being affected, but rather you're

seeing numerous states all along the East Coast that are being impacted."

David Lawrence, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, said wildfire smoke usually thins out by the time it reaches the East Coast, but this summer it's "still pretty thick."

In California, a wildfire burning completely uncontained south of Lake Tahoe crossed the state line into Nevada. New voluntary evacuation orders were issued for portions of Douglas County, Nevada.

The Tamarack Fire, started by lightning in Alpine

County, California, has now burned more than 65 square miles (168 square kilometers). Authorities say more than 1,200 firefighters are battling the blaze, which has destroyed at least 10 structures.

Meanwhile, Oregon on Wednesday banned all campfires on state-managed lands and in state campgrounds east of Interstate 5, the major highway that is commonly considered the dividing line between the wet western part of the state and the dry eastern half.

The regulation includes

the designated fire rings at campsites, as well as candles and tiki torches. Propane grills are still allowed, but the state still urged campers to pack food that doesn't require heating or cooking.

The Oregon fire has ravaged the sparsely populated southern part of the state and has been expanding by up to 4 miles (6 kilometers) a day, pushed by gusting winds and critically dry weather that's turned trees and undergrowth into a tinderbox.

Fire crews have had to retreat from the flames for 10 consecutive days as fireballs jump from treetop to treetop, trees explode, embers fly ahead of the fire to start new blazes and, in some cases, the inferno's heat creates its own weather of shifting winds and dry lightning. Monstrous clouds of smoke and ash have risen up to 6 miles (10 kilometers) into the sky and are visible for more than 100 air miles (161 kilometers).

Authorities in Oregon said lower winds and temperatures Tuesday allowed crews to improve fire lines, and they hoped to make more progress Wednesday. The fire was approaching an old burn area on its active southeastern flank, raising hopes it would not spread as much. □

Rochester mayor, husband, plead not guilty to gun charges

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP) —

Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren pleaded not guilty Wednesday to charges stemming from a police raid that allegedly turned up a rifle and pistol, and her 10-year-old daughter alone, in the home she shares with her husband.

A grand jury indicted Warren and her husband Timothy Granison last week on a felony count of criminal possession of a firearm, as well as misdemeanor counts of endangering the welfare of a child and having unsecured guns in a home.

Warren and Granison pleaded not guilty during



Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren appears with her attorney Joseph Damelio in county court in Rochester, N.Y., Wednesday, July 21, 2021.

Associated Press

brief court appearances and left without speaking with reporters.

Warren's attorney, Joseph Damelio, said the mayor didn't know about the guns

and that he was eager to review the prosecution's evidence.

Authorities searched the family's home May 19 as part of a cocaine trafficking investigation, investigators said at the time. Granison was charged with drug and weapons counts and pleaded not guilty. Additional charges against him were added last month.

Warren, who has said she signed a separation agreement with Granison years ago, has not been charged in the drug case.

The two-term mayor lost her reelection campaign last month when she was defeated in the Democratic

primary for mayor by City Councilmember Malik Evans.

Warren was indicted in October on charges she broke campaign finance rules during her 2017 reelection campaign. She has said any errors were honest mistakes. □



Unlike elsewhere, New Hampshire refunds COVID business fines

By **HOLLY RAMER**

Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) —

Three Republican governors opposed efforts this year to absolve businesses for violating public health orders during the coronavirus pandemic. But only in the “Live Free or Die” state have the scofflaws been set free of the fines.

In March, Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson vetoed legislation requiring the state to refund about \$38,000 in fines imposed on businesses for violating coronavirus safety rules, and a subsequent effort to override the veto failed.

“The only message sent by this bill is that the rule of law does not matter,” Hutchinson said in a letter to legislative leaders. “It is an affront to those citizens who diligently followed health and safety directives to protect themselves and their fellow Arkansans.”

On July 1, Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine likewise pushed back against fellow GOP lawmakers when he vetoed a budget provision that would have stopped disciplinary action against such businesses and would have resulted in about \$100,000 in refunds.

“To say to them there’s no consequences for what you did — that would simply not be right. It would send a horrible, horrible message,” DeWine said.

And New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu was equally blunt back in March when lawmakers were consider-



David Culhane, owner of the White Mountain Tavern, holds up a November 2020 letter from the N.H. Attorney General's office, notifying that his business was in violation, and also fined, after breaking an emergency order, Tuesday, July 13, 2021, in Lincoln, N.H.

ing a similar bill.

“We can’t claim to support law and order, then incentivize law-breaking and reward those who do not follow the rules,” he said. “Rewarding the small handful who recklessly thwarted public health and safety after outreach and educational attempts is a complete disservice to the thousands of small businesses who worked tirelessly to keep their employees and customers safe while enabling our economy to stay open for business.”

But the provision later was folded into the state budget, and — lacking Ohio’s line item veto authority — Sununu signed it on June 25.

“While the Governor strong-

ly opposed this provision as a standalone item out of fairness to the countless small businesses that followed the rules and helped the state recover from COVID, the Governor worked to find compromise and was not going to veto a \$13B state budget over any one provision and risk shutting down state government,” his spokesperson, Ben Vihstadt, said.

The New Hampshire attorney general had issued fines totaling \$10,000 to eight businesses, but three hadn’t paid and instead appealed the citations. Those cases were dropped in June because the state of emergency was ending, the violated rules were no longer in effect and the

appeals were using up the office’s scarce resources, said Associate Attorney General Anne Edwards. She said her office will send checks to the other five businesses “in order to be equitable,” but also will include letters reminding them that they violated duly authorized regulations and must comply with any future laws and rules.

“We stand by the legal actions that were taken in accordance with those documents,” said Edwards, who said the budget provision “raises serious separation of powers concerns.”

“When the state takes an action for a violation of the law, no matter what that action is, the Legislature doesn’t have the author-

ity to retroactively try to change those actions taken by the state.”

David Culhane, owner of the White Mountain Tavern in Lincoln, said he deeply regrets agreeing to pay \$600 of the \$1,000 fine he received after investigators said he was spotted without a mask, customers were mingling and seated shoulder-to-shoulder at the bar and musical performers were too close together.

“I wish I fought harder because I think it was unconstitutional,” he said.

While he’s glad the fines will be refunded, he thinks Sununu owes him and other businesses a public apology.

“Our reputations were all harmed because of it,” he said. “It had a huge detrimental effect on us.”

Culhane, who plans to run for governor as a Libertarian and is considering filing a lawsuit, also hopes other businesses will continue to push back against regulations they disagree with.

And the Loudon Village Country Store was fined after being warned more than 10 times that workers must wear masks. Owners did not respond to request for comment but earlier had posted a sign at the store that read: “Please refer to the Constitution of the United States! We know how to wash our hands, clean surfaces and NOT cough or sneeze on people. If you can do that and stay six feet away like someone tooted, please come in!!” □

Associated Press

Alabama city leader won’t quit after using racial slur

TARRANT, Ala. (AP) — A white city leader captured on video using a racial slur toward Black people during a council meeting said he won’t apologize, and might run for mayor. Others are calling for his resignation.

Tarrant City Council member Tommy Bryant told news outlets his use of the word Monday night reflected something the city’s Black mayor, Wayman Newton, had said during an earlier private meeting.

Standing up from his council seat

during a public session, Bryant used the slur to refer to a Black female council member, Veronica Freeman. Some in the audience gasped at his use of the slur, which was broadcast on Facebook Live, and Freeman left crying, but Bryant was unapologetic. “I did what needed to be done. It needed to be brought to light what kind of a person the mayor is,” Bryant told WVTV-TV.

The mayor said the video speaks for itself and, in an interview with al.com, denied using the same

slur Bryant uttered during the meeting. Asked whether he is a racist, Bryant demurred.

“It’s according to what your definition of the word racist is. What a lot of the public’s definition is, I might be a racist. But according to what the true definition of a racist is, absolutely not,” he told the station.

Bryant did not respond to an email sent to the city by The Associated Press on Wednesday seeking additional comment.

The Alabama NAACP called for

Bryant’s resignation, saying he had “disgraced himself and has stained the position he holds.”

While city elections are nonpartisan in Alabama, the state Democratic Party issued a statement calling for Bryant’s resignation, and the Alabama GOP noted that Newton is a Republican and said Bryant’s remark was “completely unacceptable.”

Tarrant, which adjoins Birmingham, has a population of about 6,100 and is about 53% Black, Census statistics show. □

U.K. irks EU with call to change post-Brexit trade rules

By JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British government said Wednesday that post-Brexit trade rules it negotiated with the European Union “cannot go on” and need a major rewrite, straining already tense U.K.-EU relations.

The government said Britain would be justified in unilaterally suspending the legally binding Brexit agreement but had decided not to do so just yet.

Since the U.K. left the EU's economic embrace at the end of 2020, relations have soured over trade arrangements for Northern Ireland, the only part of the U.K. that has a land border with the 27-nation bloc.

The divorce deal the two sides struck before Britain's departure means customs and border checks must be conducted on some goods moving between Northern Ireland and the rest of the U.K. The regulations are intended to keep an open border between Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland, a key pillar of Northern Ireland's peace process. But they have angered Northern Ireland's



In this Jan. 1, 2021 file photo, a P&O ferry from Scotland crosses the Irish Sea making way towards the port at Larne on the north coast of Northern Ireland.

British unionists, who say they amount to a border in the Irish Sea and weaken ties with the rest of the U.K. Britain accuses the EU of taking a “purist” approach to the rules that is causing unnecessary red tape for businesses, and has called for the bloc to show “pragmatism.” Brexit minister David Frost said Britain had tried to implement the arrangements “in good faith” but that they were causing a severe burden on busi-

nesses and society in Northern Ireland.

“Put very simply, we cannot go on as we are,” he said Wednesday in Parliament's upper chamber, the House of Lords. Frost said “the circumstances exist to justify the use of Article 16,” an emergency brake in the agreement allowing for it to be suspended by one side in extreme circumstances. “Nevertheless, we have concluded that this is not the right moment to do so,”

he said. Triggering Article 16 would likely send relations between the EU and its former member into a tailspin. The bloc is already frustrated at what it sees as Britain's failure to implement the agreement it signed up to.

The bloc's lead Brexit official, Maros Sefcovic, said the EU is “ready to seek creative solutions” but “will not agree to a renegotiation of the Protocol,” as the Northern Ireland section of

the Brexit deal is known.

The EU says Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government knew full well that there would be checks when it signed the Brexit deal.

“Britain decided itself to leave the single market of the European Union, to apply red tape to its goods that are leaving Britain, to goods that are coming into Britain,” Irish European affairs minister Thomas Byrne said. Frost said Britain was seeking a “standstill period” in which grace periods delaying the imposition of some checks and goods restrictions would be maintained while a permanent solution is found. Ultimately, Britain is seeking to remove most checks, replacing them with a “light touch” system in which only goods at risk of entering the EU would be inspected. But the low level of trust between the two sides makes that difficult. Last month, the two sides gave themselves breathing time by delaying until the end of September a ban on chilled meats such as sausages from England, Scotland and Wales from going to Northern Ireland. □

Associated Press

Saudi Aramco facing \$50M cyber extortion over leaked data

By JON GAMBRELL

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Saudi Arabia's state oil giant acknowledged Wednesday that leaked data from the company files now ap-

parently being used in a cyber-extortion attempt involving a \$50 million ransom demand likely came from one of its contractors. The Saudi Arabian Oil Co., better known as Saudi Aramco, told The Associ-

ated Press that it “recently became aware of the indirect release of a limited amount of company data which was held by third-party contractors.”

The oil firm did not say which contractor found itself affected nor whether that contractor had been hacked or if the information leaked out another way.

“We confirm that the release of data was not due to a breach of our systems, has no impact on our operations and the company continues to maintain a robust cybersecurity posture,” Aramco said.

A page accessed by the AP on the darknet a part of the internet hosted within an encrypted network and accessible only through specialized anonymity-providing tools

claimed the extortionist held 1 terabyte worth of Aramco data. A terabyte is 1,000 gigabytes.

The page offered Aramco a chance to have the data deleted for \$50 million in cryptocurrency, while another timer counted down from \$5 million, likely in an effort to pressure the company. It remains unclear who is behind the ransom plot.

Aramco has been targeted before by a cyber-attack. In 2012, the kingdom's oil giant found itself hit by the so-called Shamoon computer virus, which deleted hard drives and then displayed a picture of a burning American flag on computer screens. The attack forced Aramco to shut down its network and destroy over 30,000 computers.

U.S. officials later blamed that attack on Iran, whose nuclear enrichment program had just been targeted by the Stuxnet virus, likely an American and Israeli creation.

In 2017, another virus swept across the kingdom and disrupted computers at Sadara, a joint venture between Aramco and Michigan-based Dow Chemical Co. Officials at the time warned it could be another version of Shamoon.

The sliver of Aramco that now trades publicly on Riyadh's Tadawul stock exchange stood at 34.90 riyals a share, or \$9.30, after trading stopped last week for the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha. That puts the company's valuation at around \$1.8 trillion, making it one of the world's most-valued companies. □



In this June 28, 2021 file photo, a Saudi Aramco engineer monitors the central control room of the Khurais oil field, 150 kilometers east-northeast of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Associated Press

Japan, U.S., South Korea reaffirm cooperation on North Korea

By MARI YAMAGUCHI

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The United States, Japan and South Korea on Wednesday reaffirmed their commitment to work together on North Korea's denuclearization and other regional threats but made no progress in bringing closer together the two U.S. allies.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, who held talks in Tokyo with her counterparts, Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Takeo Mori and South Korea's Choi Jong-kun, said their alliance remains a "lynchpin of peace, security and prosperity."

The officials reaffirmed the importance of respecting international law, including maintaining freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea, and opposed any unilateral attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea and in the Taiwan Strait. "When countries take actions that run counter to the United States' interests or that threaten our partners and allies, we will not let those challenges go unanswered," Sherman said. The United States and Ja-



U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, right, South Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Choi Jong Kun, left, with Japanese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Takeo Mori, center, pose for photographers prior to their trilateral meeting at the Iikura Guesthouse Wednesday, July 21, 2021, in Tokyo.

Associated Press

pan have raised concern about China pressing its claims to contested areas in the South China Sea and the Japanese-controlled Senkaku islands, which China also claims and calls Diaoyu. "It is important for the international community to unite and raise its voice against (China's) unilat-

eral attempts to change the status quo by force, and I hope for cooperation among the three countries," Mori said. South Korea's Choi stayed away from the China issue at a joint news conference on Wednesday and stressed the importance of maintaining dialogue with North Korea.

Worsening relations between Washington and Beijing have raised worries in Seoul that it would become squeezed between its main security ally and biggest trading partner. Choi repeatedly welcomed the significance of holding the trilateral talks and said he hoped hold them regularly for "close

communication" among the three countries.

Japan and South Korea have been trying to improve ties since U.S. President Joe Biden took office calling for stronger three-way cooperation in the face of the North Korean nuclear threats and challenges posed by China. There has been little improvement.

Mori and Choi remained apart on issues dating back to Japan's colonization of the Korean Peninsula and atrocities committed before and during World War II, and only agreed to continue talks.

Mori urged South Korea to responsibly resolve issues related to compensation of wartime Korean laborers and sexual abuses of "comfort women" by Japanese soldiers to restore "healthy relations" between the two countries.

Choi repeated his country's position that the issues would not be solved unless Japan changes its position. Earlier this week, President Moon Jae-in scrapped a plan to visit Tokyo for Friday's opening of the Olympics and meet with Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga. □

U.N. migration official: 20 migrants drown off Libya's coast

By SAMY MAGDY

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Libya's coast guard intercepted Wednesday four boats in the Mediterranean Sea carrying migrants trying to reach Europe, a U.N. official said. According to the migrants, 20 people from one of the vessels had gone overboard earlier in the day and were presumed to have drowned. The circumstances under which the migrants went overboard were unclear, said Safa Msehli, a spokeswoman for the International Organization for Migration. The vessel was overcrowded as many of the rubber dinghies and dilapidated boats smuggling the migrants typically are.

It was the latest disaster in the Mediterranean involving migrants seeking a better life in Europe. Since Tuesday, a total of seven vessels smuggling

hundreds of migrants were intercepted off Libya's coast, Msehli also said. Around 500 migrants, including nine children and 43 women, were returned

to shore and taken to the Mabani detention center in Tripoli, she said. Many of the migrants were exhausted and suffered from dehydration, she added. There has been a spike in crossings and attempted crossings from Libya in recent months. Amnesty International has said that in the first six months of this year, more than 7,000 people intercepted at sea were forcibly returned to detention camps in Libya. "The situation in the central Mediterranean is a humanitarian crisis," Msehli said. "We are in July, and already have exceeded the number of interceptions for the entire year of 2020."

An IOM report earlier this month said the number

of migrants and refugees who died while attempting to reach Europe on dangerous sea crossings more than doubled so far this year, compared to the first six months of 2020.

The report said at least 1,146 people perished between January and June, with the Central Mediterranean route between Libya and Italy being the deadliest, claiming 741 lives. The deadliest shipwreck so far this year took place on April 22 off Libya, when 130 people drowned despite the ship sending multiple distress calls.

Libya has in recent years emerged as the dominant transit point for migrants fleeing war and poverty in Africa and the Middle East. □



This photo provided by the International Organization for Migration shows migrants from four boats being returned to the shore in Tripoli, Libya, Wednesday, July 21, 2021.

Associated Press

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Local businesses play a vital role in sustaining and strengthening our community. We are fortunate enough to have a wide range of local businesses, but they need your support more than ever as we move into the recovery phase of the Corona-virus pandemic. It has been a challenging time for a lot of local businesses and we're excited to work closely with them during this tough time. Aruba Today designed this special section completely dedicated to our own local stores especially for you.

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Monuments of Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Since 1996, 'Stichting Monumentenfonds Aruba' (Monuments Fund Aruba) has primarily been involved in the funding of restoration and maintenance of protected monuments, and has been the financial institution in the field of heritage conservation. The fund owns 15 monuments, out of the 36 protected monuments in the island, but there are over 300 more monuments on the list to be protected. A well-known historical monument is the Bushiribana Goldmill.



Between 1814 and 1915 there were different companies looking for gold on Aruba. This ruin was built in 1872 at Bushiribana by the Aruba Island Gold Mining Company, with the help of masons from Curacao and Aruba. A very well-known Aruban mason of that time was Alexander

Donati. A wooden crane was built to help tilt the big heavy stones. The building served as a gold smelter from 1872 to 1899. Here were millions of pounds of gold processed during the gold rush of the nineteenth century in Aruba. After the Aruba Island Gold Mining Company left, came the gold smelter in the hands of other gold mining companies. A total of 200-300 miners worked here. There were several buildings in this area during that time

including an administration office and houses for the miners. The last company that used this gold smelter was the Aruba Gold Concession Ltd. It left Bushiribana in 1899.

For more information check out their Facebook page stichting monumentenfonds aruba or their website <http://www.monumentenfondsaruba.com>.

Source: Monumentenfonds Aruba and Mr. Dufi Kock

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Aruban Hoevertsz new vice president of IOC: 'A girl's dream of a small island'

ORANJESTAD — Nicole Hoevertsz has been elected as the new Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The Aruban takes over from the American Anita DeFrantz, who has reached her maximum number of terms of two times four years.

Hoevertsz was the only candidate for the position. She showed pride after her election: "If you had asked me earlier if this was possible, I would have thought it a dream. But you make a little girl's dream of an island possible." The former synchronized swimmer took part in the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles on behalf of the Netherlands Antilles (which last competed as a country in 2008) and then started working as a sports director. In 2006 she set foot in the Olympic Committee as a member and slowly worked her way up. Hoevertsz is currently chairman of the committee that monitors the progress of the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. She is the daughter of an Aruban father and Dutch mother and studied law in Leiden.

President 2025

The new vice-president will serve on the IOC board until 2025, when her term also expires. In the same year, a new president of the IOC is also elected. Then the current chairman Thomas Bach has reached his maximum term of twelve years.

'Very close to us'

Since Camiel Eurlings withdrew as an IOC member in 2018, the Netherlands is no longer represented on the committee. Eurlings was discredited for assaulting his ex-girlfriend. According to the rules of the IOC, he could have stayed on because he had no criminal record. Gerard Dielessen, general director of NOC*NSF, said after the departure of Camiel Eurlings he was not concerned about Dutch interests. "Hoevertsz is very close to us. And we know about fifteen to twenty IOC members very well and we have a lot of contact with them. So it's not that we are out of touch," said Dielessen. But how important is such a seat in the Olympic committee? "A place within the IOC is very nice to keep in touch with the international sports world. It doesn't matter what position you are in within the IOC, you have a voice," says Hinkelien Schreuder, chairman of the athletes' committee of NOC*NSF. Schreuder therefore hopes that Dutch blood will soon flow through the veins of the IOC again and suspects that the athletes' committee is a good first step.

Ambition

"I do think that there are Dutch athletes who aspire to that, but it is a combination of qualities, capacity and timing. It takes quite some time in such a committee membership." In August, NOC*NSF nominated a new candidate for the Interna-



tional Paralympic Committee (IPC). Wheelchair basketball player Jitske Visser will then compete against 22 other candidates for a place in the IPC athletes' committee. □

Source: NOS.nl

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For today's newspaper we received a great picture from **Beth Ellyn Rosenthal**. She wrote:

"We first came to Aruba in 1989. I had been bumped on an American Airlines flight and the voucher I received was about to expire. I said to the agent, "Where is the farthest I can go?" She said "Aruba." I had no idea where Aruba was.

We fell in love the first night on the beach. Aruba has THE best beaches on the planet. Azure blue waters with no rip tides.

We also love the people. We have many Aruban friends who we see every time we come. They taught us how to make funchi!

Austin has flown to the Netherlands to visit friends we met at Carte Blanche years ago.

Aruba is truly our second home. We love the people, the place and the food". □

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Ants of the Dutch Caribbean

KRALENDIJK — Between 2015 and 2020, researchers from the Naturalis Biodiversity Center updated the local ant species lists for the Dutch Caribbean. A large number of new species were documented, including 40 new species on Saba and 32 new species on Aruba. Understanding ant populations for these islands puts us one step closer to unlocking the complexities of the Dutch Caribbean's unique ecosystems.

Ants are exceptionally complex social animals, which although we encounter them almost every day, are often overlooked. These animals have highly intricate societies which parallel that of mankind. Colonies work through a division of labor and have the ability to solve complex problems through communication and teamwork. There are over 14,000 known species worldwide, but there is still much to learn about these tiny inhabitants. Recently, researchers from Naturalis Biodiversity Center worked to update species lists for the ants of the Dutch Caribbean. Building off previous research conducted in 1930 and 1970 by H.J. MacGillavry, P. Wagenaar Hummelinck and R.H. Cobben, these lists were updated to reflect changes in the local ant populations. Through handpicking of specimens, ants were collected and sorted to determine exact species.

SSS islands

Prior to the start of the most recent biological survey, only two known species of ants were documented on Saba. Through their research, Peter Boer & Marijn J. A. Boer have now documented a total of 42 ant species. Additionally, through this same study, provisional counts of 24 and 56 species were documented for St. Maarten and St. Eustatius, respectively.

Interestingly, the surveys on Saba

were conducted after Hurricane Irma, where fallen trees obstructed researcher's ability to access some parts of the trail and heavy rainfall may have led some species of ants to shelter deeper underground, out of sight. Therefore, it is possible that there are still a number of ant species which can be found on Saba but were not accounted for in this study.

ABC islands

A new identification key was also created to cover the species found on the islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao. This key is based off the same 1930 and 1970 studies and is now supplemented with a 2020 survey of the ant species on Aruba. Interestingly, the Aruba species list was updated from 12 previously known species to 44.

Greater Importance

Understanding the local residents, both big and small, is critical for designing and implementing holistic conservation plans. Documenting the presence of specific ant species can help identify if and when any invasive species have arrived. Ants play a vital role in local ecosystems, and cataloging local species is just the first step in understanding their importance in maintaining a healthy and balanced environment.

The investigation of the ant fauna of the Dutch Caribbean is still in progress.

To learn more about the various species of ants within the Dutch Caribbean, you can find species lists at the following locations:

Species list for Saba of 42 total species.

Species list for Curaçao of 59 total species, 6 of which were also recorded on Klein Curaçao.

Species list for Aruba of 44 total species.

As well as an identification Key for Ant Species on the ABC islands.



Ant (*Leptogenys pubiceps*) Photo credit © Zach Lieberman/California Academy of Sciences- all rights reserved



Ant (*Odontomachus bauri*) Photo credit © Michele Esposito/California Academy of Sciences- all rights reserved

Report your sightings

Have you observed ants? Report your nature sightings and photos on the website DutchCaribbean.Observation.org or download the free apps (iPhone (iObs) & Android (ObsMapp)). Species reports by local communities and tourists are invaluable for nature conservation efforts to help

increase public awareness and overall species protection. Besides, DCNA, Observation International and Naturalis Biodiversity Center are working together to develop on automated species identification app for your phone. Your uploaded photos are of great value to make this possible. For questions, please contact research@DCNA-nature.org.

Tod and Barb honored as Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba



PALM BEACH — Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The Goodwill Ambassador certificate is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, as a token of appreciation to the guests who visit Aruba 20 years and more consecutively.

The honorees were **Mr. Tod & Mrs. Barb Raine** from USA! This family has been visiting the island since 2000 and stated that they love the island very much,

especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets, delicious variety of foods, its cleanliness, and Aruba's warm and friendly people whom have become like family to them.

Richardson together with the representatives of the Holiday Inn Beach Resort & Casino presented the certificate to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home.

The Kitchen Table enters sixth year of gastronomic success on NEW location: A very fine culinary journey of Caribbean and Peruvian fusion cuisine

EAGLE BEACH — The Kitchen Table is an elegant, classy, intimate, high-quality restaurant with an exceptional dining set-up. Dining here is an experience, a kind of sitting- at your-best- friend's or family's kitchen table where you feel and taste that the food contains love. Are you looking for something different, an ecstatic foody trip, than this is where you need to go.



The 7-8 course gastronomic journey will start with sparkling wine at the patio of The Kitchen Table's new location at Paradise Beach Villas as of 6.45PM. Around 7.00PM guests will be guided for a memorable dinner on the second floor of the other popular restaurant Asi Es Mi Peru. The dining concept reflects extraordinary, elegant and exquisite dishes from the Caribbean, Peruvian fusion and international cuisine created by the owners, Chef David Lizano and his team. To pair the perfect wines three sommeliers were invited to make the selection.

The interior of the restaurant is if you were in an elegant establishment in Lima, the capital city of Peru. You feel elevated in the top of the building where dinner takes place in an intimate setting. The typical, colorful Peruvian fabrics dress the ceiling while the large windows

dignify the room. There are only 16 seats available creating an intimacy underlined by the owner's personal attention. "This is an amazing experience," says Robert J. Giordanella from New York. "The food is truly divine," shares a local guest. An evening at The Kitchen Table will be noted as unforgettable in your book of vacation memories, as it stands out from the regular island dinners.

It is all about consistency

The Peruvian-born Roxanna Salinas and her husband Jan van Nes are the secret formula behind The Kitchen Table's success. The couple takes a personal approach to what they do, this is not about running a business as usual. This is more about making you feel welcomed home, as well as being pampered. They bring top hospitality, experience and



authenticity to the table. Within this gourmet dinner concept the two blended the Peruvian culinary art of Roxanna's top kitchen team and Jan's expertise from The Kitchen Table. The result is one big trip of delight, indulge and tickling of your taste buds. The Kitchen Table welcomes you with open arms every Tuesday to Saturday.

Peruvian touch

In the last ten years, Peru has been recognized as one of the world's best culinary destinations, and for seven consecutive years, the South American country has won the award for the Best Culinary destination at the Worlds Travel Awards. Biodi-

versity combined multiculturalism are the reasons why Peru is so rich in gastronomy. You can travel through the last 500 years, touch a mix of cultures whenever you taste authentic Peruvian cuisine. The Kitchen Table brings this epicurean delicacies to Aruba paired perfectly with the best wines and they will make you understand why Peru is at the height of today's gastronomy.

The Kitchen Table is open from Tuesday to Saturday. Have a peak on their website www.thekitchentableinaruba.com or call them at +297-280 7117. □



Agency eyes 'right-to-repair' rules to aid consumers, shops

By MARCY GORDON

AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Americans would be freer to repair their broken cell phones, computers, video-game consoles and even tractors themselves or to use independent repair shops under changes being eyed by federal regulators that target manufacturer restrictions.

Responding to a new competition directive from the Biden White House, the Federal Trade Commission is moving toward writing new rules aimed at helping small repair businesses and saving consumers money on repair costs. The five FTC commissioners took up the so-called "right to repair" issue Wednesday.

Unavailable parts, instruction manuals and diagnostic software and tools, product design restrictions and locks on software embedded in devices have made many consumer products harder to fix and maintain, regulators and industry critics say. Do-it-yourself repairs often require specialized tools, hard-to-obtain parts and access to diagnostic software that's guarded by manufacturers.

The restrictions have



This Aug. 26, 2015 photo shows an Apple iPhone with a cracked screen after a drop test from the DropBot, a robot used to measure the sustainability of a phone to dropping, at the offices of SquareTrade in San Francisco.

steered consumers into manufacturers' and sellers' repair networks or led them to replace products before the end of their useful lives, the regulators maintain. As the FTC and the Biden administration see it, that raises issues of anti-competitive conduct.

The repair restrictions often fall most heavily on minority and low-income consumers, the regulators say. An FTC report to Congress in May noted that many Black-owned small businesses make equipment repairs, and repair shops

often are owned by entrepreneurs from poor communities.

For minority and low-income consumers, the repair restrictions are especially acute for cellphones, the report says. Those consumers often have cell phones but no broadband access for computers at home, increasing their dependence on the phones. Industry critics say the coronavirus pandemic worsened the effects of repair restrictions for all consumers as computers became essential for working remote-

ly, schooling children at home and visiting relatives on screens while many large chain stores stopped offering on-site repairs.

Allowing consumers to make their own repairs "saves money, and it keeps electronics in use and off the scrap heap," says Nathan Proctor, a director of U.S. Public Interest Research Group's right-to-repair campaign.

"It helps farmers keep equipment in the field and out of the dealership," Proctor said in a recent statement. "More repair

choices will protect the environment by cutting down on the amount of new electronics we make and old stuff we toss."

Manufacturers, on the other hand, maintain that repair restrictions are needed to safeguard intellectual property, protect consumers from injuries that could result from fixing a product or using one that was improperly repaired, and guard against cybersecurity risks. Manufacturers say they could face liability or harm to their reputation if independent repair shops make faulty equipment repairs.

New right-to-repair laws and regulations "would create innumerable harms and unintended consequences for consumers and manufacturers alike, including by limiting consumer choice, impeding innovation, threatening consumers' safety and wellbeing, (and) opening the door to counterfeits," the National Association of Manufacturers said in a prepared statement.

Legislation to ease repair restrictions is active in about 25 states, and the European Community also is considering new right-to-repair regulations. □

Associated Press

Ford, Argo AI to deploy autonomous vehicles on Lyft network

DETROIT (AP) — Ford Motor Co. and a self-driving vehicle company it partly owns will join with the Lyft ride-hailing service to offer autonomous rides on the Lyft network.

The service using Ford vehicles and a driving system developed by Pittsburgh-based Argo AI will begin in Miami later this year and start in Austin, Texas, in 2022. It will start with human backup drivers and go fully autonomous at an unspecified date.

The cars will gather data to lay the groundwork to deploy 1,000 robotaxis on the Lyft network in multiple markets during the next five years, the companies said Wednesday in a statement.

Until April, Lyft was developing its own autonomous vehicle systems, but the company ended up selling its unit to Woven Planet, a

Toyota Motor Corp. subsidiary, for \$550 million. The sale closed on Tuesday. Under the Ford deal, Lyft will get a 2.5% equity stake

in Argo AI in exchange for ridership and safety data.

Lyft CEO Logan Green said in the statement that the deal is the first time all pieces of the autonomous vehicle puzzle have come together.

"Each company brings the scale, knowledge and capability in their area of expertise that is necessary to make autonomous ride-hailing a business reality," he said.

Ford and Volkswagen are major investors in Argo, which is working on technology that will let Ford start an autonomous ride-hailing service. Pittsburgh-based Argo is testing autonomous vehicles with human backup drivers in six U.S. cities.

The deal is the latest in a string of partnerships and consolidation in the autonomous vehicle business. In December, Lyft rival Uber announced it would sell its autonomous vehicle development arm in a stock deal. The buyer is self-driving technology company Aurora. Uber was to invest \$400 million in Aurora and hold a 26% stake in the San Francisco company.

In the Phoenix area, Alphabet Inc.'s Waymo is already offering a limited fully autonomous ride service. Cruise, General Motors' majority-owned autonomous vehicle unit, also plans autonomous ride-hailing without human backups on an unspecified date. □



In this Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020, photo, a sign marks the pick lane for Lyft car share service outside the Pepsi Center in downtown Denver.

Associated Press

CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS 45 Small

1 Ludicrous change

5 Lineup

11 Luxem-
bourg coin

12 Musical
range

13 Muffin
choice

14 Made a
point

15 Become
intertwined

17 Billiards
need

18 Breaks

22 Had
yearnings

24 Satchel
part

25 Me, to
Michel

26 Imitating

27 Fence
supports

30 "The Fifer"
painter

32 Real
bargain

33 Pendulum
path

34 "Don't
panic!"

38 Fix

41 Ocean
motion

42 Come into
view

43 Goddess
with cow
horns

44 Beats

DOWN

1 Owed
amount

2 Mystique

3 Fast-food
restaurant,
often

4 Taste bud
setting

5 Valentine
flower

6 Happens
"Cut that
out!"

8 Road
gunk

9 Genesis
name

10 Roulette
bet

16 Went first

19 French
writer

20 Account

21 Petty fight

22 Band
boosters

23 Eccentric
fellow

28 They
accept

29 Big
hammer

30 Travel
aid

31 Very
cold

35 Peepers

36 Nurse
god

37 For fear
that

38 Gym unit

39 Outback
runner

40 Crooner
Tormé

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Yesterday's answer

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13				14					
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			34	35				36	37
38	39	40						41	
42								43	
44								45	

A X Y D L B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-22

CRYPTOQUOTE

X A H W I E H Z U R A C A C B U T
O C S J A Q Z U Q Z U T Q O T X A H
R J C Z Y X A E Z Y E T G Q U H C W
U H Q J H J T X S W W X A Q Z X A H
C Z H R A C T X Q O T Q R Q O .

— N Q J N Q J Q M E Z Y T C B K H J

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THE WORLD IS A BOOK, AND THOSE WHO DO NOT TRAVEL READ ONLY A PAGE. — ST. AUGUSTINE



In this Wednesday, March 10, 2021 file photo, a couple walks through a park at sunset in Kansas City, Mo.

Associated Press

U.S. life expectancy in 2020 saw biggest drop since WWII

By **MIKE STOBBE**
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. life expectancy fell by a year and a half in 2020, the largest one-year decline since World War II, public health officials said Wednesday. The decrease for both Black Americans and Hispanic Americans was even worse: three years.

The drop spelled out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is due mainly to the COVID-19 pandemic, which health officials said is responsible for close to 74% of the overall life expectancy decline. More than 3.3 million Americans died last year, far more than any other year in U.S. history, with COVID-19 accounting for about 11% of those deaths.

Black life expectancy has not fallen so much in one year since the mid-1930s, during the Great Depression. Health officials have not tracked Hispanic life expectancy for nearly as long, but the 2020 decline was the largest recorded one-year drop. The abrupt fall is "basically catastrophic," said Mark Hayward, a University of Texas sociology professor who studies changes in U.S. mortality.

Killers other than COVID-19 played a role. Drug overdoses pushed life expectancy down, particularly for whites. And rising homicides were a small but significant reason for the decline for Black Americans, said Elizabeth Arias, the report's lead author.

Other problems affected Black and Hispanic people, including lack of access to quality health care, more crowded living conditions, and a greater share of the population in lower-paying jobs that required them to keep working when the pandemic was at its worst, experts said.

Life expectancy is an estimate of the average number of years a baby born in a given year might expect to live. It's an im-

portant statistical snapshot of a country's health that can be influenced both by sustained trends such as obesity as well as more temporary threats like pandemics or war that might not endanger those new-borns in their lifetimes.

For decades, U.S. life expectancy was on the upswing. But that trend stalled in 2015, for several years, before hitting 78 years, 10 months in 2019. Last year, the CDC said, it dropped to about 77 years, 4 months.

Other findings in the new CDC report: Hispanic Americans have longer life expectancy than white or Black Americans, but had the largest decline in 2020. The three-year drop was the largest since the CDC started tracking Hispanic life expectancy 15 years ago.

- Black life expectancy dropped nearly three years, to 71 years, 10 months. It has not been that low since 2000.

- White life expectancy fell by roughly 14 months to about 77 years, 7 months. That was the lowest the lowest life expectancy for that population since 2002.

- COVID-19's role varied by race and ethnicity. The coronavirus was responsible for 90% of the decline in life expectancy among Hispanics, 68% among white people and 59% among Black Americans.

- Life expectancy fell nearly two years for men, but about one year for women, widening a longstanding gap. The CDC estimated life expectancy of 74 years, 6 months for boys vs. 80 years, 2 months for girls.

More than 80% of last year's COVID deaths were people 65 and older, CDC data shows. That actually diminished the pandemic's toll on life expectancy at birth, which is swayed more by deaths of younger adults and children than those among seniors. □

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Conservative media offers mixed messages on COVID-19 vaccine

By **DAVID BAUDER**

AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When Dr.

Alexa Mieses Malchuk talks to patients about the COVID-19 vaccine, she tries to feel out where they get their information from.

"Sometimes I feel like the education I have to provide depends on what news channel that they watch," the doctor in Durham, North Carolina, said.

The mixed messaging can come from the same media outlet and even the same source. On Fox News Channel on Monday, host Sean Hannity looked straight into the camera to deliver a clear message: "It absolutely makes sense for many Americans to get vaccinated. I believe in science. I believe in the science of vaccinations."

Yet Hannity followed up his statement by interviewing a woman protesting her college's requirement that students be vaccinated, a segment appealing to people skeptical of the immunization push. His prime-time colleagues, Tucker Carlson and Laura Ingraham, opened their own programs by questioning vaccination efforts.

Skepticism about the COVID-19 vaccination is a common theme in media appealing to conservatives, despite assurances from doctors and scientists that the vaccine is safe and effective. Some medical experts worry that conflicting takes and outright distrust of the vaccine shown by influential media personalities contribute to a failure to meet inoculation goals aimed at arresting the pandemic. Two recent exchanges in recent days on Fox News Channel's popular morning show, "Fox & Friends," illustrated the mixed messaging.

During a discussion of Los Angeles County's decision to reinstate mandates to wear masks indoors, even if people are vaccinated, guest host Lawrence Jones said, "People are saying, 'Why get the vaccine if you're not going to return to normal? What's the use of doing it? Why?'"

"Well, you won't die," colleague Steve Doocy replied. "That's a good reason."

Doocy, arguably Fox's most influential figure arguing in favor of vaccinations, also took on co-host Brian Kilmeade on Monday when he said people should not be judged if they decide not to get the shot. Doocy

months absorb a deep skepticism about the vaccines.

Malchuk says some patients who are happy to take her advice on, say, diabetes medication, have resisted her encouragement that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective in warding off serious illness.

"I see people polarized in

theories that they dispel that the vaccines cause cancer, damage fertility or contain microchips.

Most themes on talk radio or television networks like Fox, Newsmax or One America News are more subtle or philosophical.

The vaccine is experimental, still not fully approved, is one line of attack. Wait

her father died of the virus.

"They do not come out and say, 'Do not get the vaccine,'" Urquiza said.

"Their strategy is to create a culture of confusion."

Carlson and Ingraham have been the most aggressive in questioning vaccinations. Carlson has said "the idea that you could force people to take medicine they don't want or need" is scandalous. But he also told viewers on Monday: "We're not saying there is no benefit to the vaccine. There may well be profound benefits to the vaccine. Our mind is open and has been from the first day. We never encouraged anyone to take or not to take the vaccine. Obviously, we're not doctors."

Ingraham has suggested viewers "hide your kids" from "Biden's vaccine pushers." She also said Monday that "we want everyone to be healthy and safe and have their risk assessment done properly."

On conservative media, resisters are depicted as heroes. Fox's Pete Hegseth hailed a woman who filmed herself confronting two health care workers who were urging residents of a Los Angeles housing complex to get vaccinated and told them to leave the building. Dan Bell, a One America News network host, invited a Republican congressman on as a guest because he admired the way the politician refused to answer an "activist journalist" who had asked about his vaccination status. A Newsmax anchor, Rob Schmitt, on July 9 questioned whether vaccinations go against nature.

"If there's some disease out there, maybe there's just an ebb and flow to life where something's supposed to wipe out a certain amount of people, and that's just the way evolution goes," he said. "Vaccines kind of stand in the way of that."

Since then, Newsmax and its founder, Chris Ruddy, have said he and the network strongly support Biden's efforts to widely distribute the vaccine. □



In this Aug. 7, 2019, file photo Fox News host Sean Hannity speaks during a taping of his show, "Hannity," in New York.

Associated Press

responded that the vast majority of people who are dying of COVID-19 are unvaccinated.

"That's their choice," Kilmeade replied.

Several personalities on Fox News Channel including Bill Hemmer, Dana Perino, Bret Baier, Greg Gutfeld and the three-member "Fox & Friends" morning team have been vaccinated and publicized their status. Rupert Murdoch, the network's founder, has been jabbed, too.

The prime-time hosts, who consistently have the biggest audience, keep their status to themselves, although Hannity has said he was going to get vaccinated. Carlson, when asked directly by two journalists whether he's been vaccinated, responded by asking their favorite sex position his way of saying it's too personal a question.

Even casual consumers of media targeting conservatives over the past few

terms of where they get their information, from whom they get it and, yes, it is politically charged," she said.

Dr. Laura Morris, who works in an area of Missouri that has seen a surge in COVID-19 infections, said that she had hoped for less polarization and that more people would have responded to seeing the positive effect of vaccines. "There are a lot of things out there that are harmful to public health right now," she said. "Anything out there that says vaccines are not good for you, that is false."

Social media and the internet are major factors in what U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy warned last week was an alarming flow of disinformation about the vaccines.

Doctors like Malchuk and Morris, who regularly sees patients in Fulton, Missouri, suspect the internet is behind the more outlandish

and see. There's no reason for young people to get it. Natural immunity is better. It's none of your business what I do. Government the Biden administration especially is intruding upon your life, trying to take control of your body.

"The advice they are giving you is not designed to help," Carlson said Monday on his show, the most popular on cable news. "It is designed to make you comply."

Two hours later, Ingraham said that it was President Joe Biden and his allies, not conservative media figures, who are "superspreaders" of COVID-19 misinformation.

The cumulative effect of the stories is to raise doubt in the minds of people who may already be looking for a way to avoid the jab of a needle and syringe full of chemicals going into their bodies, said Kristin Urquiza, who started the organization Marked By COVID after

Sweden stuns U.S. 3-0 in women's soccer at Olympics

By ANNE M. PETERSON
AP Sports Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Sweden didn't have to bunker down on defense against the Americans this time. Stina Blackstenius scored a pair of goals and the Swedes stunned the United States at the Olympics with a 3-0 victory Wednesday in the women's soccer tournament. The Americans, ranked No. 1 in the world and the favorites to win gold in Tokyo, were riding a 44-match unbeaten streak heading into the match. But Sweden, ranked No. 5, has been the U.S. team's nemesis of sorts in recent years. The Swedes bounced the Americans from the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games in the quarterfinals, the earliest U.S. Olympic exit ever, by making a defensive stand.

This April, Sweden played the United States to a 1-1 draw in Stockholm, which snapped a winning streak dating back to January 2019 when the Americans lost to France in the run-up to the World Cup. It was the U.S. team's only draw this year. "Did we expect this result tonight? No," said U.S. forward Megan Rapinoe, who did not start but came on as a substitute in the 64th minute with the score 2-0. "It's frustrating, and it's frustrating that it's Sweden. They found a lot of space on us. I don't even know how many goals we have given up this whole year. I don't remember the last time we gave up a goal. So to give up three is not great." Sweden's offense deserved all the credit. Blackstenius' header into the far corner off a cross from Sofia Jakobsson in the 26th minute gave the team a first-half lead.

The United States, which came out stale, had its best chance of the opening half in the final moments when Rose Lavelle's shot hit the post. Coach Vlatko Andonovski made changes for the second half, subbing in Carli Lloyd for Alex Morgan and Julie Ertz for Sam Mewis. But Blackstenius scored



United States' Tobin Heath reacts after losing 0-3 against Sweden during a women's soccer match at the 2020 Summer Olympics, Wednesday, July 21, 2021, in Tokyo.

Associated Press

again in the 54th minute, beating goalkeeper Alyssa Naeher, as the Americans continued to struggle. Lina Hurtig added the final goal in the 72nd.

Sweden goalkeeper Hedvig Lindahl acknowledged the win over the favorites was encouraging, but it's still just the beginning of the tournament.

Ahead are group games against Australia and New Zealand. "I know for a fact that you can go very far in a tournament even if you lose to the USA or whoever you play in the first game," Lindahl said. "So in the end I don't know how much it means, but for sure we showed the world and ourselves that we can play well against a team like the U.S. or any team." □

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Title rewards Antetokounmpo's decision to commit to Bucks

By **STEVE MEGARGEE**

AP Sports Writer

MILWAUKEE (AP) — This could have been the off-season in which Giannis Antetokounmpo entered the free-agent market and perhaps teamed up with another superstar to try winning multiple NBA titles together.

Antetokounmpo instead will spend the summer celebrating a championship he won with the team that picked him.

Leading the Bucks to their first NBA crown in half century rewarded Antetokounmpo for his December decision to sign a super-max extension with Milwaukee. Antetokounmpo averaged 35.2 points, 13.2 rebounds and 5 assists to help the Bucks beat the Phoenix Suns 4-2 in the NBA Finals.

"I could go to a superteam and just do my part and win a championship," Antetokounmpo said Tuesday as he was flanked by the Larry O'Brien trophy and his NBA Finals MVP trophy. "But this is the hard way to do it and this is the way to do it. And we did it." Antetokounmpo, 26, stuck with the franchise that had taken a chance on him eight years ago by selecting him with the 15th overall pick in the draft. He was just 18 then.

Loyalty matters to Antetokounmpo, who grew up dealing with poverty in Greece.

He spent much of his post-game news conference



Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo smiles while holding the NBA Championship trophy, left, and Most Valuable Player trophy after defeating the Phoenix Suns in Game 6 of basketball's NBA Finals in Milwaukee, Tuesday, July 20, 2021. The Bucks won 105-98.

thanking the people who helped get him to this point. He praised the current and former Bucks officials who assisted in his development. He wore a T-shirt honoring Jim Paschke, who retired this year after broadcasting Bucks games for 35 seasons.

Most of all, he spoke about his family while crediting his Nigerian parents for the sacrifices they made along the way. Three of their sons have now won NBA championships, though Giannis is the unquestioned star of that group.

"I can be stubborn sometimes," Antetokounmpo said. "I can disconnect myself from the world be-

cause I want this so bad. I wanted this so bad, and I was able to get it. That's why I was tearing up. But people helped me to be in this position. I didn't do it by myself. Every freaking day, people helped me." He also thanked the city that has become his basketball home.

Antetokounmpo averaged 6.8 points his rookie year as Milwaukee staggered through a 15-67 season, but he developed into a two-time MVP while helping the Bucks emerge as annual contenders.

A surprising second-round loss to Miami in the play-off bubble last year could have caused Antetok-

ounmpo to start planning his exit from Milwaukee. Antetokounmpo instead doubled down by signing that extension.

"This is my city," Antetokounmpo said. "They trust me. They believe in me. They believe in us."

His love affair with the Milwaukee area was evident Wednesday morning as he went on Instagram Live and ordered 50 chicken nuggets at a local Chick-fil-A drive-through with his trophies in his car. When fans started approaching his vehicle, Antetokounmpo chatted with them and let them take pictures.

The Bucks didn't have the smooth regular season

they'd enjoyed the last couple of years.

Jrue Holiday, the team's top offseason addition, missed 10 games due to COVID-19. After entering the playoffs as the NBA's top overall seed in 2019 and 2020, the Bucks posted the seventh-best record in the league and had the East's No. 3 seed this year. But that regular-season adversity gave the Bucks the toughness they'd need in the postseason.

"We knew it wasn't always going to be pretty," Bucks forward Khris Middleton said.

"We knew we were going to have to win different styles of ballgames, but that's the type of team you want to be, to throw different guys out there, different lineups out there, because you can't win the same way at this level."

Like many champions, the Bucks got some good luck along the way.

James Harden missed the first three games and Kyrie Irving sat out the last three games of Brooklyn's second-round series loss to Milwaukee. But the Bucks also showed their mettle by erasing 2-0 deficits against Brooklyn and Phoenix. Antetokounmpo delivered his dominant performance in the finals while playing with on a left knee he had hyperextended just a few weeks ago. The Bucks were 10-1 at home in the playoffs. □

Associated Press

Her story: 1st time all-female broadcast crew calls MLB game



YouTube in-game reporter Alanna Rizzo, part of an all-female broadcast crew, interviews Brandon Lowe, left, after the Rays' 9-3 win over the Baltimore Orioles in a baseball game Tuesday, July 20, 2021, in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — There was history — and her story, too — in the broadcast booth at Tropicana Field on Tuesday night.

For the first time in Major League Baseball history, an all-female announcing crew called a game as the Tampa Bay Rays played the Baltimore Orioles.

The YouTube broadcast featured Melanie Newman on play-by-play with Sarah Langs as the analyst. Alanna Rizzo was the on-field reporter, and Heidi Watney and Lauren Gardner hosted the pregame and postgame coverage.

"This was so much FUN!" Langs tweeted after the Rays' 9-3 win.

"Honored to be part of a historic moment, but more than anything, just so overjoyed to get to work alongside" her colleagues, she said, praising them as "Strong, smart & inspiring WOMEN and PEOPLE!"

Newman is the Orioles' play-by-play radio announcer, Langs writes for MLB.com and Rizzo, Watney and Gardner are on air for MLB Network.

"It's not a novelty, it's about normalcy," MLB Network tweeted.

"Trailblazers" posted the official MLB Twitter account.

Tennis champion and social justice advocate Billie Jean King celebrated the broadcast by posting on Twitter: "It's a history-making night for #MLB." □